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INTEGRATING COMPUTER SOFTWARE WITHIN THE
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education:
Instructional Technology

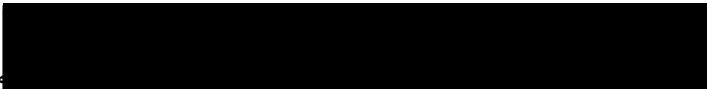
by
Leslie Serine Ouren
March 2005

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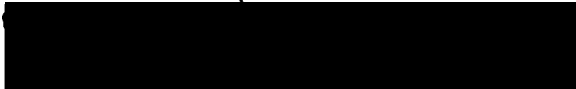
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by
Leslie Serine Ouren
March 2005

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ABSTRACT

This project was created for third grade teachers who use Houghton Mifflin™ Language Arts series and want to integrate computer software into their writing curriculum. The website created includes all the writing assignments that the students are to complete and the required software used to complete the assignments. A literature review was done to provide essential information on how to use effective writing techniques and subsequently integrate technology for that assignment. The design of the website was made so that teachers would not have to create new lesson plans in order to integrate technology for the lessons they already need to write and teach. The website has the writing assignment with the instructions on how to integrate technology while using the lesson format provided by their teacher's manual.

DEDICATION

To Patrick, thank you for all your patience, guidance, and persistence through this project. Without you, this project would not have been completed. I love you very much.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

Introduction

The contents of Chapter One presents an overview of this project. First, the contexts of the problem are discussed followed by the purpose, and significance of the project. Next, the limitations that apply to the project are reviewed. Finally, definitions of terms are presented.

Statement of the Problem

The problem is to address the need for use of technology as students leave their schooling years and enter into the working environment. The need for students to have a background rich in technology is essential for many jobs. After looking at the types of standards teachers use at the elementary level, technology can be easily integrated into the writing curriculum. Most students at the elementary level do not enjoy writing, but when it is integrated with different computer programs, it can be easier to motivate students to write. When student's motivation is increased, the quality of work will also increase.

Along with students learning how to use computers, teachers also need the time and guidance to incorporate technology into their lessons. Quite often technology is pushed to the side when it comes to giving teachers training for the use of computers. Having lessons already available for teachers to integrate with the assignments they are teaching will make it more likely that technology will be integrated into lessons.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to develop a website that gives teachers an easy way to integrate technology into the writing component of the Houghton Mifflin Language Arts program. The problem is that not all elementary students are given the opportunities to learn how to use the computer and the software, along with the Internet. I will provide a website that will give other third grade teachers who are using this program specific ways to implement technology with the writing assignments within the program. This in turn, allows the students to learn how to use computers.

Significance of the Project

The significance of the project is to enable many teachers who do not know how or do not have the time to

learn technology standards and then find a way to integrate them into their curriculum. With the drive of getting higher API scores, technology has been pushed to the side. Students today need more motivation for learning, especially for learning to write. These students are driven by video games and television, which of course are forms of technology. Motivating students to write by using technology and teachers having the resources to easily integrate technology is the goal of this project. Getting students to learn the writing standards and enjoy writing at the same time, will be beneficial for students.

With the advent of the "No Child Left Behind" act, teachers are required to differentiate their lessons according to the child's level of achievement. When technology is integrated into the writing curriculum, teachers can easily differentiate their plans. Many times students who struggle with writing on paper, do better when they can use the computer to do an outline or mental map of what they need to do. Also, students are able to utilize the features that computers come with, so it is easier to edit and produce a final draft

Limitations

During the development of this project, a number of limitations were noted. These limitations are the following:

1. This website will be limited for teachers who teach third grade.
2. This project targeted teachers whose district has adopted Houghton Mifflin as their language arts program.
3. This project requires teachers to have access to computers either in their classroom or a school lab with at least most of the same software.
4. There is a small sample group of teachers utilized due to school size.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as they apply to the project:

1. ELL-English Language Learners. These are students whose first language is not English, placed in an English rich environment.
2. API-Academic Performance Index. This is one of the measures the state of California used to measure student progress.

3. Houghton Mifflin TM language arts series. This is one of the two language arts series available for adoption by the state of California at this time.
4. GATE- Gifted and Talented Education. This is a program for students who academically gifted where they are learning more in depth on topics than the average student.
5. Technology. Desktop or laptop computers that have software, internet capabilities, and telecommunications (email or message boards).
6. Technology Integration. The use of computer software, the Internet, or telecommunications by a student for an assignment.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter Two consists of a discussion of the relevant literature. Specifically, using effective writing strategies and integrating them with technology. The five steps of the writing process will be discussed and how they can be integrated into using the computer for doing traditional writing assignments. The website designed for this project incorporates these writing steps.

The Writing Process

For many years teachers have been giving their students writing activities, with the goal of making them better writers. Students go through a process in order to produce a good piece of writing. To properly accomplish their writing activity, teachers make sure that the students have a sense of audience. In addition to student's sense of audience, they also must go through the writing process of brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. Traditionally, students do their writing activities on paper, but now students are able to use computers to do their writing assignments. The writing process will show how the traditional writing

strategies can be used for doing writing assignments with technology.

First, students need to have a sense of audience. "The purpose of writing is to communicate with an audience, which can be defined as actual readers or as the writer himself" (Strange, 1988 p.1). People write differently to different people and students need to have that awareness. The way students write for their teacher is different from how they would write a letter to their peer. According to Strange (1988), publishing the students work can have a beneficial factor in developing a student's sense of audience. Displaying student written poems or descriptive writings throughout the school or sending friendly letters to another class are ways students can write for different audiences. These are skills that all students must possess. When teachers are able to create writing assignments that develop student's sense of audience, students are able to learn the value of writing as a way of communicating. Along with a sense of audience, students need to practice going through the five steps of the writing process.

The first step is brainstorming or prewriting. This aids students in determining the topic on which they are writing. It also helps to generate ideas or details about

that topic. This can be done with many different graphic organizers. This is the step where students get their ideas down on paper in a logical order. For this part of the process students don't need to worry too much about grammar or vocabulary. They just need to quickly get their ideas down so they are not forgotten. Students are able to talk with each other to share ideas, and develop oral skills, all without the teacher's help. The organization of this step allows the student to develop their sense of audience.

After the brainstorming step, students start on their first draft. Many times students need to talk out their ideas in order to put them together in a logical sequence.

Brainstorming will help students use the comprehension strategies they learned to stay on topic, to make sure their writing is sequential and to decide if what they want to write is going to be realism or fantasy (Cunningham, 1999).

The third step of the writing process is revising. This can be a difficult step for students. Here, students go back and read their paper to make sure they didn't leave anything out and make sure the information is in the correct order. This involves reviewing the results of their brainstorming and comparing what they have in their

outline, we, or graphic organizer to what is in their first draft. During this step students can change any of the content to ensure clarity. By sharing, and discussing students can help clarify their writing, how it will be written and expand on their oral skills and vocabulary. This interaction helps students to expand their ideas and communicate more expressly before the editing step perfects the form and grammar (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 1995).

Editing is the fourth step. Students need to reread their writing and then make the changes in grammar and how the paper flows while reading. Students can have their peers read their paper to help them make their corrections, or they can do it themselves. Peer editing can be a very effective way of teaching students to look for grammatical errors in not only their own paper, but also other's papers. Students need to understand the importance of making their corrections on the paper itself so they know exactly what needs to be corrected. This step should not be done in the same day as revising. When doing a writing activity a person generally needs a day to step back from what they are writing so they can see the errors. Sometimes when students write and then have to edit the same day they see what they are thinking, and not

what is on the paper. Sometimes teachers forget this and the student work suffers.

The final step in the writing process is publishing.

This is where students rewrite or type up their final draft. Students need to take pride in their work and show off what they have accomplished, whether it be a friendly letter or a paper describing their favorite animal. The final draft may be displayed where other people can read it- on a bulletin board, bound into a book, sent to another person, or performed as a play. "Young students frequently appreciate seeing their writing displayed on a bulletin board in the classroom or bound into a book and placed in the library." (Strange, 1988 p. 3).

Integration of Technology With Writing

The writing process can be difficult for any student, but for English Language Learners, it is even more challenging. Not only do English Language Learners have to write using conventional writing skills, they have to learn the English language at the same time. Native English speakers, when learning to write just have to learn the mechanics of writing. Most elementary students are acquiring language skills. Each of the steps for the writing process is essential for students who are

developing their language skills. "The overall educational objective to connect reading, writing, and discussing through activities that accommodate diverse learning styles and that further students linguistic development—that lay the groundwork of a communications pyramid to be raided throughout the students adult lives."

(Cobine, 1995 p. 3). Once students have mastered some of the English language, the writing steps become easier, and their writing improves.

Today many students have computers and video games at home. They spend their free time using this type of technology; therefore these are what they are comfortable with and enjoy. Butzin (2001) states that computers are assumed to be an effective learning tool that provides motivation and feedback, which are associated with positive learning. If students already enjoy using the computer, why not incorporate their writing assignments to use the computer?

Teachers traditionally have their students do their writing assignments on paper, but today many classrooms are equipped with computers. Just because students can do their writing assignments on the computer, does not mean they still don't need to go through the writing process. The only difference is that the students do all the steps

with different programs on the computer. They still need to have a sense of audience, and they need to go through the steps of brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. There are many software programs that students can use for the writing process. For brainstorming, a very good program is Inspiration, [™] or Kispriation [™] for younger students. This program will allow students to make webs, maps, or outlines and organize all the information for them to use in their writing assignment. This type of organization not only helps native English speakers, but also the second language learners. Inspiration[™] gives them a visualization of how their writing assignment will look.

Using Technology With The Writing Process

The steps of drafting through publishing can be done on the computer through various software programs. Students can type up their assignments on a word processing program or create a presentation through Kid Pix [™] or Power Point [™]. A word processor will tell students automatically if they have a spelling error, and also help them with grammar syntax. These types of technology are a great motivation to students who do not spell well or struggle with grammar. Because students are

already motivated by technology, it will be easier for teachers to reinforce the effective writing strategies in order to produce a well written assignment. The software programs can also be helpful in the revising and editing steps.

Teachers still need to use their effective strategies, rather than just put the students in front of a computer. According to Brown (2003), students still need to learn by example, then try to duplicate the process on their own after the teacher has taught the skill. Teachers still need to provide guided writing, give plenty of examples, guide students through similar writing assignments, and then finally let the students show what they have learned. For example, students learning how to write a friendly letter will learn the form, do examples in class, and then finally students can type up a letter using a word processing program and email it to a friend or a pen pal in another class, or anywhere in the world. Students can do their brainstorming with Inspiration™, then type out their draft and edit their letter with the word processing program. After the letter is in final format, the student can then send it electronically, or by mail. This type of activity can be done even at the primary levels.

The goal for most teachers is to have their students to become independent writers. Dyrli and Kinnaman (1996, p. 60) found a study by Dr. Henry Jay Becker of the University of California, Irvine, stated nine benefits to students who used online learning activities.

The nine benefits to students are: "1. apply themselves for longer periods of time, 2. take on more responsibility for their own learning, 3. average students are communicating and producing in ways that only gifted students did before, 4. are better at working collaboratively with peers, 5. take more interest in world events and foreign cultures and societies, 6. expertise is more equally distributed, 7. have a deeper understanding of the ideas they encounter, 8. have more interest in understanding the adult world, and 9. are able to communicate with adults they do not know personally.

Becker found that the students used a variety of online learning activities. The most popular ones were using the World Wide Web for searching for information, using an electronic keypal exchange between students, publishing class or individual projects, collaborative projects with classes in other places, and cultural exchanges with other classes. Teachers who use these types of online activities along with good writing strategies have students who can focus and enjoy writing. When students are able to focus for a longer period of time to do their writing assignment, then they will then internalize the

writing strategies being taught. The fact that the writing has an actual purpose and other people will see that writing, will make students more willing to learn about the sense of audience, and comply with the five steps for writing. According to James Britton's (1975) research on writing, which has a broad range of writing purposes and audiences. Writing also promotes learning as a developmental process.

In order to get students to become more independent writers, teachers need to adapt their lessons for the use of technology. This in turn means that teachers need to have knowledge of the computers and how to effectively use the software programs or the Internet. If teachers are going to have students do an assignment that will be sent via email, then teachers need to make sure they know whom students are communicating with, and keep a watchful eye on what is being sent. Even though teachers use effective teaching strategies, they still have to have the special skills for online, or technology enriched lessons (Dyrli & Kinnaman, 1997). These skills for using technology enriched or online lessons are critical. Teachers need to know how to use the software being used, so that the quality of student work is acceptable and so students are able to properly do their assignment. When students send

a piece of writing to another person via email, the teacher needs to know the proper way to send the email. If students are using an online format for their writing assignment like message board or chat rooms, the teacher need to know how credible the site is and how secure it may be from inappropriate information or links to other sites. These skills are necessary for the teachers not only for the safety of the students, but also for the teacher.

As with any new curriculum, comes the training. When districts adopt new curriculum, teachers receive the training on how to implement it correctly. Integrating technology is like getting new curriculum, teachers need to think of the writing assignments in terms of using computers to complete them. They still need to use the same teaching technique, but now they need the knowledge of how to effectively use computers in the classroom. Sometimes districts will have inservices available for teachers, but most of the time teachers need to learn these skills on their own. This can be from another teacher at their site, or from outside help by taking a college class.

Having students produce writing assignments from the use of technology is beneficial to both the teacher and

the student. Students enjoy working with computers and have a basic knowledge base at an early age, and teachers enjoy seeing their students create well written creative assignments while learning the skills taught to them. Teachers still need to use effective writing techniques even though students may not be doing their assignment on paper. Students need to know whom they are writing for, they still need to go through the five step writing process, and they need to have their work published in some form.

Instructional Design Process and Web Design Guidelines

Not only are the writing steps important for quality work, the design process is equally important. When looking at different design processes for developing a website, the ADDIE model was the basis for this project.

The first step for this instructional design is Analyze. Here the instructional problem is explained and goals and objectives are created. Other components to look at are who the learners are, what they need to learn, and how the outcome will be delivered. The developer has to develop guidelines to know whether or not learners have met the objectives and goals. Another component to

consider is how much time is needed for the project and if there are any constraints.

The second step in the ADDIE model is design. This is where the designer shows each objective in a way that will help the learners accomplish the objectives (Morrison, Ross, & Kemp, 2001). Another component of this step is to identify and list the steps needed to perform each of the objectives. The designer also needs to list how the objectives will be mastered. An additional element to this design step is to make sure that the sequence and structure of the learning objectives are clear, concise, and given in the form from the simple to the more complex.

Develop is the third step in this model. During this step the developer lists all the tools and processes used to create the instructional material (Strickland, p. 1). The designer shows how the website for this project was created and the steps that were taken to include the objectives and the outcomes from those objectives. Also, the steps and procedures are listed so it is known who is responsible for each part. A storyboard, all video, and audio components must also be listed.

The fourth step in the ADDIE model is implement. This is where a plan to test and perform the project.

Training the teachers and preparing the students are also done in this step. Training the teachers how to use the software and then be able to teach students to use the software is critical for this project. Students also need preparation that they will be using different types of media to incorporate into their writing.

The final step in the ADDIE model is evaluate. The designer reviews all the steps taken to make sure the objectives have been met. Collecting all data either being interviews with others using this design, tests, or other outcomes derived from this project. Revising any training is done either with teachers or with students to ensure that all people are able to complete the objectives. The designer must also talk with teachers using their design to guarantee clarity.

When looking at creating a website using the ADDIE method, a designer needs to have some guidelines. First the homepage needs to list the objectives for using the site. The website also needs to be organized in a way that a person is able to find what they are looking for easily. The consistency of the navigational bar throughout the website is essential for users. The order of the navigational bar needs to be in a logical order, either linear or sequential. Users should be able to go

from page to page finding the information they need and be able to return back to where they started.

Also the color palette should be consistent through the website. It is a good idea to have the background colors the same on all the web pages. Furthermore, the colors that the developer uses should be pleasing to the eyes, not too bright or not too dark. When choosing colors the developer needs to be aware of what color the links will be, and adjust their color palette accordingly. A user should not be confused on where a link is located because it blended in with the background or another graphic.

When adding text to the website, the developer needs to make sure that the font is a common one. A developer may like a particular font, but not everyone may have that font on their computer, and may not be able to view the text. The text font should also be the same throughout the pages, so the reader is not distracted or confused by differing texts. Along with text, graphics need to be consistent through the website. It creates more of a flow when graphics look similar in style.

In order for users to get the most information in a short amount of time is to have the important information available to them on one screen or page. Users in

general, do not like to have to scroll down or across in order to get the information they want. So when a person develops a webpage, having the most important information in one page is vital. Also the necessary links need to be in proximity to the other information. Information on pages should be evenly spaced, consistently through the website, to ensure a good flow through the website.

Summary

Using effective writing strategies and integrating them with technology is essential for the motivation and beneficial learning of students. The five steps of the writing process were discussed and shown how they can be integrated with technology for doing traditional writing assignments. Applying these writing strategies and putting them into a website for teachers to use will ease the anxiety for teachers on how to incorporate technology.

CHAPTER THREE

PROJECT DESIGN PROCESSES

Introduction

Chapter Three documents the steps used in developing the project. Specifically, making the website, dividing up all the themes with the writing assignments for each theme and story, and how to integrate technology into each writing assignment were the steps for designing the website. The instructional design for this website followed the ADDIE procedure.

Analysis

This website is intended for teachers who teach third grade in the state of California. These teachers must have Houghton Mifflin™ for their language arts series. This series is broken up into six themes; with each theme having different types of writing skills for students to master, which are directly correlated with the state's writing standards. In talking with teachers, they want to be able to use technology more, but they either do not know how to use technology or do not know to incorporate it into their curriculum. The reason for the website is so teachers can integrate technology with each of the tasks that are given to the students. For example, in the

fourth theme students are to write a newspaper article. Instead of writing one on paper, or in a word processing document, students can use the program Publisher™ to create a more realistic article.

The goal for the website is to allow teachers to easily integrate writing skills presented in the Houghton Mifflin program with technology. Teachers will have to factor in more time for students working on the computer at the beginning, but once the students become more comfortable, it will be faster and easier. The work that the students do produce can be better in quality and the students' motivation is likely to be higher. Students will use Word™, PowerPoint™, Publisher™, Storybook Weaver™, KidPix™, and other similar software. Teachers determine whether a student has accurately completed the assignments are by the rubrics given by Houghton Mifflin™ and teacher rubrics.

Design

The objectives and purpose for this website are for students to improve their writing skills through the use of technology. Students will use different types of software to complete their writing assignments that are required by the language arts program. Teachers will also

be able to easily look to see the steps on how to incorporate the writing process steps along with technology.

In looking at all the necessary assignments that students are required to accomplish for each theme, I have different activities that teachers can use that incorporate technology for those writing assignments. The website is divided into six main sections, one for each theme. Then each theme is subdivided for the stories within that theme. Each story will have the writing assignments required and have the appropriate programs and directions that are used to complete the writing assignment (see figure 1). Teachers needed to have the internet to access the website. Teachers also needed the basic knowledge of each of the computer programs listed for the assignments. If teachers do not know how to use the programs, I will provide training.

The activities that teachers can use to incorporate technology into the writing assignments also correlate with good writing techniques. Each of the suggestions for the assignments gives ways to use technology within the steps for the writing process. There are different ways to do the brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing steps while using the computer. Teachers do

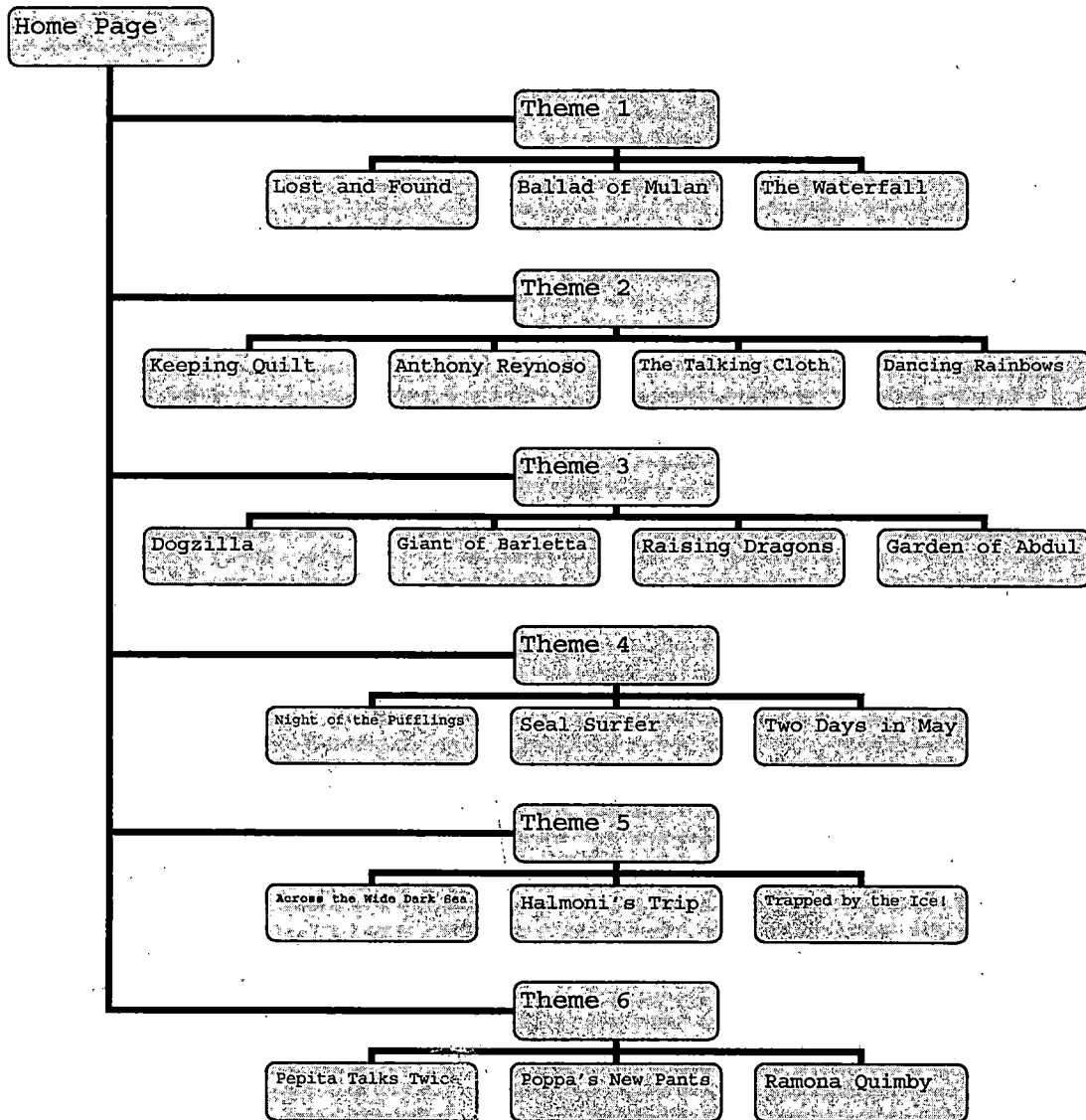


Figure 1. Storyboard of Website

not always have to use a word processing program or traditional paper to accomplish tasks. The website shows ways to do each of these steps using different types of software programs or using the Internet to complete writing assignments that will incorporate all learners. In the beginning, teachers will need to give students step by step instructions guiding them through the process of using the different types of technology to complete a writing assignment. Students will need specific guidelines in order to use the software properly and produce quality work, but after students are comfortable using the different types of software, they will be able to explore different options for completing writing assignments.

When designing the website, I wanted a simple design, so teachers would be able to easily find their information. The navigation on each page is simply either centered or at the bottom of the page. The colors that were chosen for this website compliment the colors used by the Houghton Mifflin teacher's editions. I wanted soft colors that were pleasing on eyes, and that would not distract from the contents on the page. The format of the website is sequential. The pages start at theme one, and ending in theme six. Also, the stories and writing

assignments for each theme are in the same order as they appear in the Houghton Mifflin teacher's editions.

Development

In order for students to successfully complete the writing assignments while integrating technology, certain computer applications are needed. The programs needed for integration are Microsoft Word™, Microsoft PowerPoint™, Microsoft Publisher™, Kid Pix™, Storybook Weaver™, Print Shop™, and Inspiration™.

All six themes have writing activities. Each theme is broken down into three or four stories, with each story having its own writing activities. Some of the assignments are reviewed or repeated throughout all the themes, and are only listed once in the first theme in which they are introduced.

I created a home page, using Microsoft FrontPage, which has a link to each of the six themes. The home page also has a link to a page that has all of the software that is recommended to use for each of the writing activities. There is a link to email me with any questions at the bottom of the homepage.

Next, I created a new page for each of the six themes. On the theme one page, there are the names of the

three stories along with the picture that corresponds with the story. All the pictures and titles are hyperlinked to a page that lists all the writing assignments for that particular story. When a teacher wants the writing activities for a particular story, they can either click on the title of the story or the picture and it opens to all the writing assignments for that story.

At the bottom of each theme page there are links that goes back to the home page, to each of the themes, or to the list of software. While at the bottom of each of the pages that lists the writing assignments for a story, there is a link that goes back to that particular theme. For example, from the home page if a teacher wants the writing assignments from the third story of theme two, the teacher would first click on theme two, then once on that page, the teacher would click on The Talking Cloth picture or title. The next thing that is shown is a new page with the writing assignment: writing a description of a character.

The overall design for this website has a simple structure so teachers are able to find themes and stories easily. On the home page, the navigation is in the middle of the page in a vertical format, but when you click on a specific theme the navigation bar is at the bottom of the

pages after the story names. I wanted a website that is organized in such a way that any teacher would be able to find what they are looking for easily. Website pages are organized so that the main links or story/theme names are at the top and centered so that teachers do not have to scroll down for important information. Also, when on a page that gives suggestions of how to integrate technology with the writing assignments, all the suggestions are linear in format. The assignments are given in the same order as the teachers manuals, and the link to go back to that theme is at the bottom center of the page, but in a larger font size so it is easily seen.

As for the colors and fonts, I chose colors that went along with the Houghton Mifflin™ program. The light purple color, as a background color, is easy on the eyes, so it is not overpowering, and is a nice compliment for some of the pictures of the stories. The font is "marker" and is easy to read and is still simplistic in style. I want everyone to be able to read the names of the stories and theme names, but still have a little visual style to the website. The site at which this website is being hosted is: <http://webpages.charter.net/louren/My%20Webs>

Implementation

In order to implement this project, teachers will need their teacher's guides from the Houghton Mifflin™ language arts series. Going through each theme teachers will use the website/CD that I created, integrating technology with the writing assignments given. Traditionally, teachers have students write out their assignments on paper, but with today's technology teachers can use the website/CD to help motivate students to write better and be more enthusiastic about the assignments. The website/CD will only give the assignment type and which program(s) to use in order to implement them. The teacher's guide will give full directions on what students are to accomplish for the task. For example, in the website and CD under theme four, will be a research report for the readers-writers workshop, and listed with it are the programs that can be used, Word™, and PowerPoint™. The website also tells teachers to do the brainstorming, editing and final draft in Microsoft Word and create a presentation using Microsoft PowerPoint. In order to retrieve the full instructions for the research report, the teacher will still have to use their teacher's guide to find out that students are to write an animal research report and use the rubric given. Teachers will need to

utilize the computer lab as much as they can and/or use their classroom computers.

The way I will introduce this website is by going to the third grade teachers at my site. I will give them the web address or CD, which ever they prefer, and go through how to find the activities they will need. I can do a training session for those teachers after school.

This project will be first implemented at Westside Park Elementary in Southern California. This is a Title 1 school with over 50% of the student population being Hispanic. There is also a wide range of learners at this school site from students who do not speak the English language, many being the first time in a school setting, all the way to children who are involved in the GATE program. Westside Park Elementary School does have a computer lab with enough computers for each class. The only drawback is that teachers only have access to the lab once a week. Each teacher, on the other hand does have at least 1 or 2 computers in their classrooms.

Evaluation

The process in which I evaluated how this project was implemented and used was by talking with teachers to see what type of experience they had, either positive or

negative and of course the experiences I had myself. I was able to see which teachers used the computers with their students to do the writing assignments and what type of quality those assignments produced. The teachers and I also noticed the student's motivation towards writing while using the computers.

While working with the website and writing activities is that I found the assignments took much more time than I anticipated. The students did enjoy using the computers to do the assignments rather than writing on paper, and the quality of the writing did increase. After the initial frustration of learning to type, the positive energy put into writing assignments was much more than doing written assignments on paper. Students enjoyed making PowerPoint™ presentations the most, but they also liked having the spell check on the word processing program to help them with the editing process. When students made their PowerPoint™ presentations I noticed that the quality of the writing was better than when students hand drew pictures to go along with their presentations. Also, students tended to write a little more when they could type up their paper on a word processing program, knowing that they would not have to rewrite their whole paper again for the publishing stage.

Some of the difficulties I encountered were that there was not enough computer time for students to do their work. Only having an hour a week in the computer lab, and 2 computers in the classroom made finishing assignments, in a timely manner, difficult. Also, students expressed their frustrations while learning to type. Once the students typing skill increased, their writing assignments were completed faster, and their interest in writing increased.

Summary

After looking at why teachers wanted to incorporate technology more into their curriculum, and how they were not able to do accomplish this task, I created a website to assist them. I divided up the six themes from the Houghton Mifflin™ Language Arts program along with the stories and writing assignments that go with them. Within the website for each writing assignment are suggestions of ways to incorporate technology into that assignment. Teachers were given the website to try with their class, along with myself, to use to see what type of motivation for writing, and quality of work that was produced.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Included in Chapter Four is a presentation of the conclusions as a result of completing the project. Also, the recommendations resulting from the project are presented. Lastly, the Chapter concludes with a summary.

Conclusions

The conclusions extracted from the project follows.

1. The results obtained from this project indicated that using the website/CD did stimulate the interest of writing in students.
2. Not all students will have equal access to a computer and the software needed in order to complete assignments. Some students have a computer at home to use, and finished their work faster and with better quality.
3. After the initial frustrations, by the students, of learning to type, the quality of work increased.
4. More time was required to complete the writing assignments than initially planned or time allotted for in the computer lab. The one hour

per week was not enough time to put all the writing process steps in place and have the high quality of work expected. More time would allow students to put more effort into their assignments, and give them greater confidence and more interest in writing.

Recommendations

The recommendations resulting from the project follows.

1. Technology should be integrated into traditional based writing assignments to enhance material being taught.
2. Students should have more time to access the computers either in the computer lab or classroom to put the effort and quality into their assignments.
3. Third grade teachers using the Houghton Mifflin™ Language Arts Program should use the website to stimulate student interest in writing as an alternative to traditional paper written assignments.

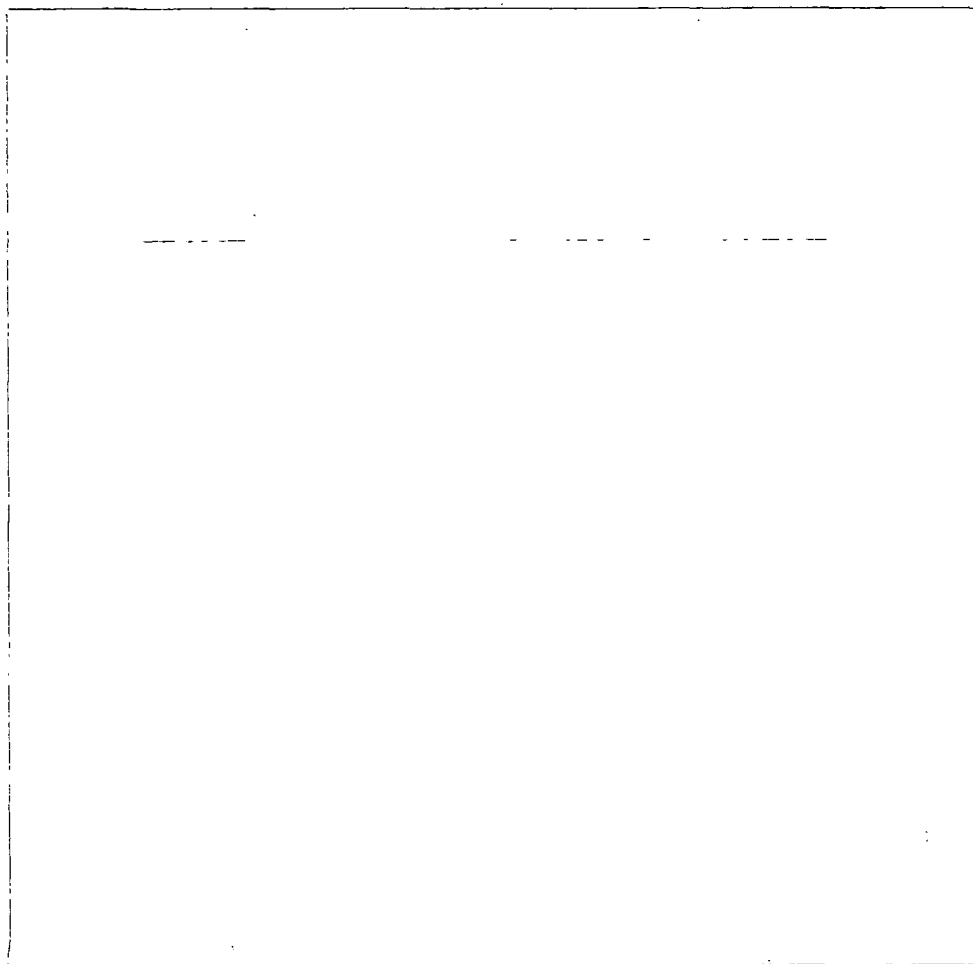
Summary

After reviewing the conclusions, students who had incorporated technology into their writing assignments, not only had more of an interest in writing, but also the quality of their writing increased. Along with integrating technology with the writing assignments, came time and patience. Students needed the time to go through all five steps of the writing process and produce quality work. The time that is allotted to each teacher is not equivalent to what students needed. The students who were fortunate to have a computer at home to complete their writing assignments were able to complete them faster and with more quality put into that assignment.

Lastly, the recommendations derived from the project are that third grade teachers who want students to become proficient in their writing skills and have knowledge of computers, should incorporate technology into writing. Also, teachers who incorporate technology into their lessons should expect to use as much time as possible in the computer lab, and use classroom computers often. More time is needed to complete lessons using technology than having students write their assignments on paper.

APPENDIX A
CD OF PROJECT

CD on this page



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